**Pride and Prejudice Discussion Questions**

On a separate piece of paper, make notes on three of these discussion questions. Be prepared to offer a thought on all seven of them during our class discussion.

1. *Pride and Prejudice* is probably Austen's most famous, most beloved book. One element, the initial mutual dislike of two people destined to love each other, has become a cliché of the Hollywood romance. I'm sure you can think of numerous examples.

   To what extent is this book really about love? If it does not revolve entirely around the concept of love, what else is there?

2. Lydia and Wickham pose a danger to the Bennet family as long as they are unmarried and unchecked. But as a married couple, with little improvement in their behavior, this danger vanishes.

   In *Pride and Prejudice* marriage serves many functions. It is a romantic union, a financial merger, and a vehicle for social regulation. Scholar and writer Mary Poovey said that Austen's goal "is to make propriety and romantic desire absolutely congruent." Think about all the marriages in the book with respect to how well they are fulfilling those functions.

3. Austen suggests that in order to marry well a woman must be pretty, respectable, and have money. In the world of *Pride and Prejudice*, which of these is most important? Spare a thought for some of the unmarried women in the book—Mary and Kitty Bennet, Miss de Bourgh, Miss Georgiana Darcy, and Caroline Bingley. Which of them do you picture marrying some day? Which of them do you picture marrying well?

4. Throughout *Pride and Prejudice* there are those whose reasons for marriage are described as being “sensible” and those whose reasons are “mercenary.” What is the distinction? Consider the factors behind specific marriages in this book. In your mind, which characters marry for the “right” reasons? What are the “right” reasons? Consider Austen’s society rather than viewing this idea through a 21st-century lens.

5. Elizabeth Bennet says, "People themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever."

   Do any of the characters in the book change substantially? Or do they, as Elizabeth says of Darcy, "in essentials" remain much as they ever were? Is it merely others’ opinions of them that change over time? Are the changes in Darcy and Elizabeth major or minor?

6. Elizabeth is furious with Darcy for breaking up the match between Jane and Mr. Bingley. Although he initially defends himself, she changes his mind. Later when Lady Catherine attempts to interfere in his own courtship, he describes this as unjustifiable.

   Comment on Darcy’s role as matchmaker. Who are the other matchmakers? Compare/contrast their tactics and the outcomes of their efforts.

7. What is the social commentary Jane Austen makes in this novel? What aspect(s) of her society do you think she condones? What aspect(s) do you think she condemns?